

Walking

There's one activity that you can start today to improve your health, and with so many people counting on you what could be more important? That activity is walking. Walking has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

Why walking?

- Walking is an activity that can engage the majority of people and is accessible to all.
- Walking is easiest form of physical activity, meaning it offers to greatest potential for participation, compared to other forms of physical activity.
- Common barriers to physical activity include lack of time, having nobody to be active with, that it's expensive or that it may require special equipment. Walking overcomes many of these barriers as it is free, can be done from your own front door, and requires no equipment other than a pair of shoes. Because of its wide appeal it is an activity most people can do with their friends, family, co-workers or the dog...anytime, anywhere.

How much walking is enough?

Adults need at least:

2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of <u>mild/moderate-intensity aerobic activity</u> (i.e. brisk walking) every week and
<u>muscle-strengthening activities</u> on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

OR

1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) of <u>high/vigorous-intensity aerobic activity</u> (i.e. jogging or running) every week and
<u>muscle-strengthening activities</u> on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

OR

An equivalent mix of <u>mild/moderate-and high/vigorous-intensity aerobic activity</u> and
<u>muscle-strengthening activities</u> on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

10 minutes at a time is fine. We know 150 minutes each week sounds like a lot of time, but you don't have to do it all at once. Not only is it best to **spread your activity out during the week**, but you can **break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day**. Do your activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for **at least 10 minutes at a time**.

(more on back)

Be Active // Be Healthy

Make walking part of your day

There are many ways you can fit walking into each day for recreation, transport, pleasure and to improve your health. Here are some suggestions to help get more:

- **Walk with friends:** Walking with friends is a great way to make walking social and fun. Having a friend who is comfortable walking at the same speed can help keep you both motivated.
- **Walk the dog:** Just like their owners, dogs need physical activity for good health. Dogs are never too busy, so plan times in your day to take your dog for a walk - you will both feel the benefits!
- **Walk with your family:** Walking is an activity that the whole family can enjoy together. It is a great opportunity to hear the latest news and spend time together. Walking with your family can be fun, convenient and an easy way to keep active and healthy.
- **Walk to unwind:** Our lives can get busy, so it is important to make time to unwind. Walking improves your mood, mental health and well-being.
- **Walk at work:** Most of us spend a large part of our day at work, and for many, the majority of this time is spent sitting. Often we forget that there are plenty of opportunities during our working day to keep active. Try these at work this week:
 - go for a walk during your work day to get lunch or enjoy a chat with a work friend
 - walk to a meeting instead of driving
 - get off your chair once in a while to speak to a work colleague instead of emailing them
 - take the stairs instead of the elevator

Be sure to walk smart. If you haven't been active for awhile, first check with your health care provider. Your health care provider can help you determine a walking schedule that's right for you based on your age, weight and current level of activity. Over time, you'll be able to walk farther and more quickly.

Benefits of Walking:

Studies have shown that walking helps people relax, sleep, feel better, and increases energy. It also:

- Reduces stress
- Tones muscles
- Helps control appetite
- Increases the number of calories used by the body
- Reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and colon cancer
- Can help reduce blood pressure in some people with high blood pressure
- Helps maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints
- Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Fosters improvements in mood and feeling of well being
- Helps control weight, develop lean muscle and reduce body fat

Other Facts about Walking:

10,000 steps = approximately 5 miles [goal for achieving an active lifestyle] (2,000 steps = 1 mile)

Resources:

American Heart Association	www.heart.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity
National Women's Health Information Center	www.womenshealth.gov
American Podiatric Medical Association	www.apma.org

For More Information:

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Women's and Men's Health
301 Centennial Mall South - P.O. Box 94817
Lincoln, NE 68509-4817
Phone: 800.532.2227 Fax: 402.471.0913

www.dhhs.ne.gov/womenshealth and www.dhhs.ne.gov/menshealth